

PETER STONE BROWN

June 21, 1999

Hi David,

Enclosed is a tape of Dallas Frazier.

As I told you Frazier is one of the great (country) songwriters of all time.

Originally from around Bakersfield, CA (best known for Buck Owens & Merle Haggard), Frazier started singing professionally at 14 (he's about a year older than Bob) and played (I believe) in Ferlin Husky's band. But being 14, he went back to school and re-emerged some years later when one of his songs "Alley Oop" became a huge hit for the Argyles. This and several other songs that were hits are on his first album *Elvira* recorded in '66. The song "Elvira" became a hit for the Oak Ridge boys about 20 years later -- they ruined it. As you will hear, though Frazier was best known for country, his first album was steeped in R&B, but a crazy, funky, almost greasy version of R&B. On this album are several songs that Charlie Rich also covered and were hits for him more in the South than in the North such as "Mohair Sam."

Some years later Frazier recorded his 2nd album, *Singing My Songs* which is much more "country" and includes several country hits that may ring a bell 'cause some crossed over to the pop charts such as "Son of Hickory Holler's Tramp" and "There Goes My Everything." This also includes what is possibly his greatest song "California Cottonfields" which was done by a host of people including bluegrass bands and folkies.

This is followed by various covers of Frazier tunes by Charlie Rich, George Jones, Merle Haggard, Jerry Lee Lewis and Conway Twitty. On the Rich covers, I think you'll be able to see the Dylan connection especially around the time of *Nashville Skyline* and the C&W covers of *Self Portrait*. Dylan mentioned listening to Charlie Rich around this time in a couple of interviews and this is the stuff Rich had out at the time -- "Behind Closed Doors" was a few years away.

In some cases I included covers of the same tunes because the versions were so good, particularly Haggard's cover of "California Cottonfields" and the Rich stuff. But be forewarned, this is *hard-core* country where the (semi-joke) lyrical hook is all important. However on Cottonfields you will

see how deep Frazier could go if he wanted to. In either case to me it's mostly fun stuff.

Frazier retired from songwriting in the late '70s and became involved in Christianity and may now be a minister. His songs were hits for many, many artists (more than are on this tape) and the list of his songs in the BMI database goes on for 21 pages! Some songs like "Beneath Still Waters" you may recognize from other singers like Emmylou Harris.

According to a site I found on the web, Frazier is considering returning to songwriting, but so far this hasn't happened.

Most of the music here with the exception of the Charlie Rich stuff (which came out on CD a few years ago) is impossible to find (even the Haggard) and for all I know the Rich stuff may now also be out of print as Mercury was recently taken over by Seagrams in a huge corporate maneuver a few months ago that saw the dissolution of that label and several others.

Anyway, I hope you enjoy the tape though I realize it may not be your thing.